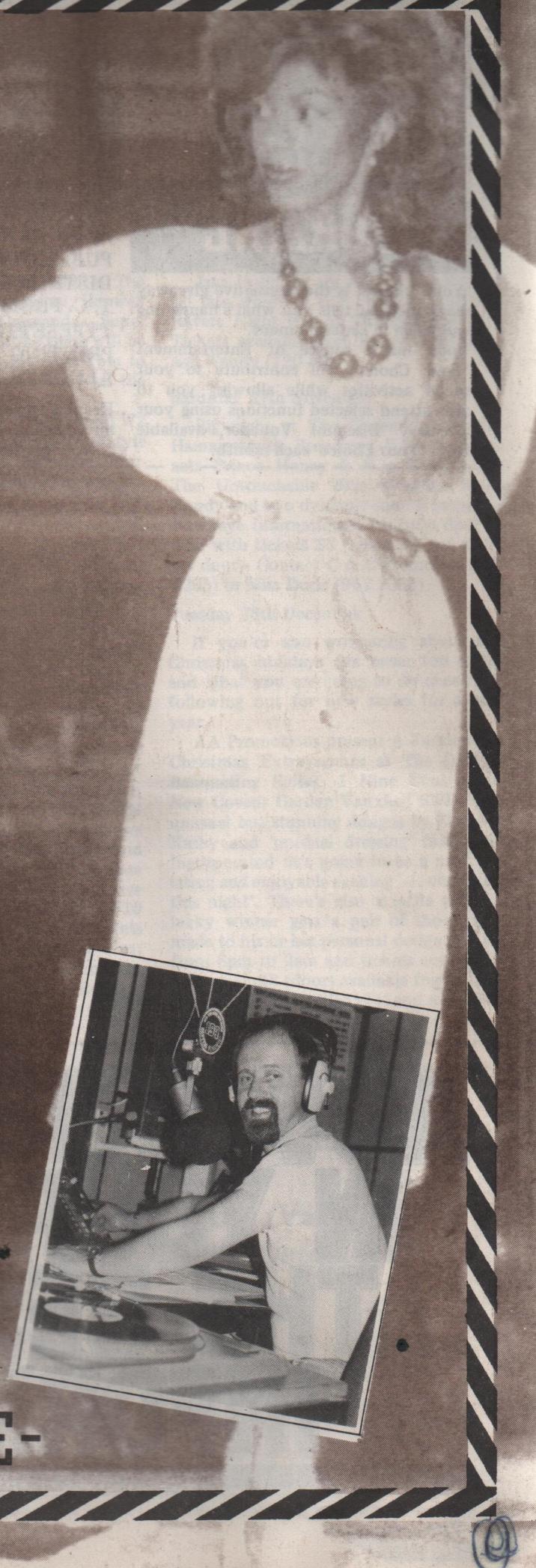


YOUR CHOICE

London's FREE Monthly
Entertainment Guide

Issue Number One November 1982

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Stargaze on
RODIGAN
AND MUCH MORE -



YOUR CHOICE

YOUR CHOICE MAGAZINE

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CHECK IT OUT

Friday 5th November

Although traditionally a night of outdoor entertainment there will be a good deal of sparks flying indoors if the following 'light up the skies with a crucial dub style' extravaganzas are anything to go by.

First off, is a night of all round entertainment with TPA Promotions presenting A Guy Fawkes Extravaganza (display at 9pm prompt), The Administrators live, Disco Incognito (& guests) and Bar-B-Q by Pepe. Tickets are £5, from 8pm till 2.30am and it all happens at The Oak Tree, 1 Western Avenue, East Acton, W3.

Spiritualist Hall, Kelvidon Road SW6 will do its best to contain the bass 'n' stick of Peoples Sound Black Star Liner from 7pm till late with food and drinks. Tickets £1.50 in advance from promoters Cygnet Youth Club and £1.75 on the door.

Get fit and go to a Sportswear 'come as you dare' Party with prizes for the best outfit along with a raffle. It's a Jack & DS International happening and the collective body swings at St Hilda's Hall, Club Row E2 from 8pm to 2am. Tickets are £2 with musical instruction from DJ International Sounds.

Sunday 7th November

Joy and Poncho invite you to a Night Out with music by Frontline International at The People's Club 5a Praed Street W2.

Friday 12th November

A Night of Lovers Rock with music by Frontline International Again, it's at The People's Club and Pex and Poncho are beckoning 'rope in early'.

Saturday 13th November

A Grand Dance is to be held at The Park Hotel, Greenford Avenue, Hanwell W7 and with the The Crescendos, Super Sonic Disco, bar and cuisine there will be no let-up of entertainment from 7pm to 1am. Tickets £3 (advance), £3.50 (at the door).

The People's Club, 5a Praed Street W2 will be showcasing — with love a dub style from Java Hi-Power and Hawkeye International — a Night for Original lovers.

Saturday 20th November

'Hi dance fans' is what Roy and Francis say. What they are doing is inviting you to A Dance at White City Training Centre, Wood Lane. Music by the 'fabulous' Bionic Sounds and a £3 admission at the door.

A Night of Gala and Entertainment is being presented by L and M Promotion at The Clarendon Hotel, 1 Hammersmith Broadway W6. Proceedings will kick off at 8pm till 3am and will feature In Concert Owen Gray and his band The Addiction and the Dynamic Zagada Band with special guest artist Tim Chandell. The live shows will be supported by Harlesden No 1 sound The Dragon. Tickets are £4 in advance and £5 at the door. Coaches also leave Roxy Cinema, Craven Park Road NW10 at 10pm sharp costing £5 inclusive. Tickets and information on the following Nos: Lynn Grant (965 2263), Me, Amigo Hairdressing (965 3302) and Orbitone Records (965 8292).

Friday 26th November

Java Hi-Power are rocking from 10pm till late where W & P Promotion present Ravers Night Out at The People's Club. Tickets available from Panzy (223 9573) and Wendy (720 8665).

Saturday 27th November

Big night at The Clarendon Hotel, 1 Hammersmith Broadway W6 with stage acts Prince Honey & Boy Wonder and The Untouchable Blue Wonders Band, Randy and two dynamic sounds including Hawkeye International. It's from 8pm till 3am with tickets £3 (advance) and £3.50 (at door). Contact C & C Promoters (451 4205) or Miss Doris (961 1093).

Tuesday 28th December

If you're also wondering about the Christmas holidays (it's never too early) and what you are going to do check the following out for new styles for a new year.

AA Promotions present A Fashionable Christmas Extravaganza at The Podium Banqueting Suites, 1 Nine Elms Lane, New Covent Garden Vauxhall SW8. With unusual but stunning designs by Elaine & Kathy and 'musical dressing' from Soul Incorporated 'it's going to be a most exciting and enjoyable evening . . . check out this night'. There's also a raffle and the lucky winner gets a pair of shoes hand made to his or her personal design. It runs from 8pm to 2am and tickets cost £6.50 (advance), £8 (door) available from Elaine (674 0045), Pat (530 5174) and Akin (965 8199).

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GROOVE MOVER

YOU CAN LOSE a lot of sleep in the sound system business just watching the costs mount up, but somehow Java have found a successful formula for keeping their expensive hobby on its toes.

Java hi 'power' fi, (and that is no understatement), inject as much energy into running their sound system as a business, as they do in making sure their sessions are rammed with people enjoying themselves.

For some of the group it's a full time job, but the rewards are big. It was Java that supported 'Supadupa' Dennis Brown when he kicked off his British tour at the Zig-Zag in July.

Sunday night in Cricklewood, and music drifts from upstairs and into the forecourt of the Carib Club. The tunes, more than likely fresh out of Jamaica, aren't familiar, but they're hard.

Upstairs the rulers of rhythm are warming up, floors, walls and eardrums vibrate from the bass.

The coach parked outside the club doesn't belong to a party in the pub next door, it's Java's. Most of the seats have been removed to carry the equipment, with seats at the front to give the lads, 'a bit of comfort'. The two or so Mercedes also parked out front serve as evidence of the perks enjoyed by the sound which takes its function more seriously than just as a routine weekend exercise.

The North London based sound started eight years ago, when Ronnie Fearon left the then defunct 'Iron Sound' to form a group of his own. 'I just used to buy records, as a hobby, and friends would ask me to play at their parties. This started to happen a lot, so in the end I thought, why not make this pay, and it started from there. It was just like making a business out of my hobby,' he said.

The 10 (ish — that's the official figure), strong team of Ronnie, who owns the sound, Jumbo, Macca, Marshal B, Roger, Plastic, Freddie, Derek, Jungle Man, Jerry, Hansil and Roddy — Ronnie's brother, (With Ronnie demanding that all the lads get a mention), decided on the name Java (originally Jarva), through instinct. The

name felt easy, it just clicked.

Finance is a crucial factor in the maintenance and survival of any sound system, Java seem to have found a formula that puts them among the leaders.

It cost Ronnie about £2,000 to get the sound started, it's now worth about £10,000 he says, and that's just equipment not including records. The putting together and building up has been done over the years, up keep alone is about £3-4000 a year, for repairs and equipment alone.

'Records again is another thing, especially getting Dub plates which have to come straight out of Jamaica,' said Ronnie, 'We spend about £40 a week on these. You have to take into account paying custom duties and friends who bring them over. Then again we spend about £20-30 a week on soul.'

This gives a rough idea of how much sounds must be prepared to spend if they are to be competitive, says Ronnie.

There is a long silence as he examines the question of whether or not Java is making good returns. It's probably the businessman in him that taught Ronnie not to rush into giving answers about money, or he was probably just taking in the music coming from downstairs.

After gnawing it over in his mind he replied: 'Let's put it this way, if a sound says it's making good returns then it's doing pretty well, any sound which says that. If anyone turns round and says he's breaking even, I'd believe that,' he said of a business where too many sounds fall apart because they are over subsidised.

Java have found a vital cog and that is the emphasis of the system — being run and treated like any business should be.

'It's still a hobby in a sense, but an expensive one. Everyone puts something in the kitty in case something comes up, like repairing damaged equipment, but it never works out that way.'

'There's always equipment to add on, the coach to service, records, speakers — it's a never ending process. Everything just mounts up. It never stops on the maintenance side, you lose a lot of sleep, definitely.'

Java is an 'on the road' sound, literally. They bought their coach for £900 and did most of the customising themselves for a further £1,000. 'It's not so good having to travel around in a lorry. The idea

JAVA

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

was to have something big enough to carry the equipment and provide some form of comfort as well.'

There is also more opportunity for the sound to tour. Last February they were in Holland for a week, mainly touring although they played one session over there.

Ronnie has plans to make Java into a mobile group, which was the idea of having a coach, apart from the comfort. He feels that it's now easier to handle places like Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol as well as take on parts in Europe.

He says of the coach, 'If it lasts for three years, it was a good investment. If not it's dead money, but we'll have to see how it works out. So far it serves its purpose.'

Inevitably, Java feels it can cater for any crowd, not many sounds would claim otherwise, yet Java has commanded respect in this dog-eat-dog business of heavy competition and falling turnover in clubs.

'You've got to cover the whole area of reggae and soul and take into account the audience you're playing to. Some say lovers, some say 'yard man style', it's crucial that you're versatile.'

The idea of being a mobile sound for Java, extends to the fact that nowadays people tend not to want to pay to go to clubs, and sound systems can't always command a price.

'What's killing the sound system business is that a lot of people are coming into it especially young sounds, who out price themselves. This affects the older sounds too. But there's a lot of business potential that can work out good for really dedicated sounds.'

If there was some sort of union to regulate rates and conditions people could choose sounds which best suited them, out of that union. (What did I say about Ronnie being every bit a businessman?)

He emphasises that running a sound is a commercial venture just like anything else, so why not apply the same principles?

'Every one sound would like to think it's the best there is. We provide for all tastes and ages; youth clubs, older people's dances, community dos. We can't really afford to specialize, we barely exist as it is.' Of course from an outsider's view Java would seem very prosperous indeed, but in the sound business it seems that everyone is on a shoestring. □



SOUND SYSTEMS SCENE

EACH MONTH Sound Systems' Scene will try to inform you of the activities of your favourite Disco/Sound System so to all Disco/Sound System Operators who would like details of their 'Bookings' included in this Free Listing, forward all details in WRITING to 'Sound Systems' Scene', (Your Choice), 30 St. Mary's Road. London N.W.10 4AP.

November

Java Hi-Power, Hawkeye International, People's Club, Paddington, Sat 13th, Admission not known.
Bionic Sounds, Wood Lane Centre, Shepherds Bush, Sat 20th, Tickets £3.00 (Door)
Dragon, Clarendon Hotel, Hammersmith, Sat 20th, Tickets £4.00 (advance) £5.00 (Door).

Java, People's Club, Paddington, Fri 26th, Admission not known.
Creation Sounds, Addis Ababa, Multy Racial Centre, High Wycombe, Fri 26th, Tickets £2.50 (advance) £3.00 (Door).
Randy, Hawkeye International, Clarendon Hotel, Hammersmith, Sat 27th, Tickets £3.00 (advance) £3.50 (Door).

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Two Sides of Rodigan

"IN THE EARLY days on Radio London no-one saw me so presumed I was black. It shocked them to discover I was white. People in this country seem to think reggae is a black man's thing but if you go to Jamaica the guy who runs Channel 1 is Chinese/Jamaican, and Chris Blackwell, one of the first to produce records over there, is a white Jamaican."

Deborah Bain caught David Rodigan as he popped into Capital Radio to collect records for his Saturday night show.

Dressed casually in a Capital Radio sweatshirt, jeans and white trainers, David Rodigan looked different from a few months ago. 'It's the beard. I had to grow it for the film.' He had recently returned

'... I hated rock music and all that.'

from making the last episode of Shackleton in Greenland. 'It's about the life of Shackleton the explorer. I play the part of his best friend Frank Wild.' Asked how he found Greenland he laughingly replied 'cold'.

Sitting in the press office at Capital David explained how he's an actor by profession but a reggae music lover at heart. Growing up amongst the black community in Oxford sparked off his love for black music. 'When I was at school there were mods and rockers and we used to hear ska records in the clubs. I can't describe how they made those sounds but just loved the music. I used to spend my lunch, pocket, and Saturday job money buying whatever the new releases were.'

'Then ska became rock steady. I thought it was the tops of Jamaican music — lovely melodies and good lyrics. I hated rock music and all that. From the age of 14 I have been collecting records. Now I've got thousands.'

After taking 'O' and 'A' levels he dropped out of college at 19 to attend drama school. He studied drama for three years before working in a repertory theatre and doing various other theatre work. At 24 David made his first movie. *The Worp Reaction* was not released in England but earned him three Best Actor awards at European film festivals. He has had major parts in various tv series such as *For Maddie With Love*, *Horse in the House*, and more recently the popular Guinness adverts with that talkative Toucan.

It was while working at the Albany Theatre in Deptford that David's first radio break came. 'I heard Radio London were looking for new presenters for their Reggae Time programme.' David got the job

and worked with Tony Williams on the B & B Show (the new name for Reggae Time). 'I had no formal training as a disc jockey so found it difficult at the beginning. As an experienced actor I thought I'd have to act at being a DJ, but really being a DJ is just being yourself.'

After hearing him Capital invited David to do the History of Reggae followed by a short spot on a Friday night show called *Mummy's Weekly* with Nicky Horne. 'It started as a few minutes and ended as over half an hour of reggae news and brief interviews,' said David, evidently pleased with his success.

The next proposition from Capital was to change his life and that of London's black population. David explained how he was still working with Radio London when Capital invited him to host their new reggae show. 'I thought if I could on Capital what Tony was doing on Radio London it could only be a good thing.'

That was three years ago. Now every Saturday night from 10pm to midnight millions turn their radio dials to 194mw to catch Roots Rockers — apparently Britain's best reggae show (it has won the Black Echoes Award for the best reggae show for the past two years. Before that Radio London held the title for the same amount of time). 'Me na leave me gate till Roots Rockers done' — one of the show's popular jingles rings true for many of the loyal listeners.

The man who says he never dreamt of becoming a disc jockey because he had always wanted to be an actor is certainly carrying the swing as far as reggae followers are concerned.

'... To your average DJ Reggae was a joke.'

'This music needs good presentation. To your average disc jockey reggae was a joke but it has got a history, some great stars, producers and songwriters. Before I came to radio you never used to hear revival songs. I think all shows should have the latest songs, popular hits and oldies,' said David.

People have compared his show to Tony's but David strongly denies any animosity between them. 'We are competing and do discuss music but there is no hostility between us. Nobody loves competition more than the public. The fact is we both have a job to do and that is to play reggae music to the people of London.'

Apart from the radio show David has a resident spot at Gossips in Dean Street. 'I used to play out by myself but can't toast and you know how the reggae crowd love a toaster.' Pappa Face, a toaster with his own sound system Mafia Black, has

appeared regularly with David for the past two and a half years. 'I met him whilst doing a gig with Frontline International at the Bali Hai Club in Streatham. I'd heard he was pretty good and gave him a chance on the mike.' Pappa Face has made three records which David says is 'the natural progression for him.'

David may rate his mate Pappa Face but his opinion of reggae music in general has fallen considerably. As he says, 'the days of melody, harmony and production, especially in records from Jamaica have gone. I don't think there has been a great singer from Jamaica for years. Michael Prophet is the last person I felt had anything to offer.' The majority of records that come over from JA are by DJs. This unique style of music is to JA what rapping records are to the USA.

'... I hate in music people who can't sing ...'

High up on his list of good DJs are Yellow Man, Michegan & Smilie, Ringo, Nicodemus, and Billy Boyo but David readily admits that although such toasters are clever their records don't have the staying power of singing ones. 'I think its sad JA hasn't produced any great talent for years. Bob Marley, Bob Andy, Dennis Brown, Burning Spear and Bunny Wailer are all good songwriters. You remember their songs more than a lot of the toasting records.'

'In the UK you have had the development of lovers rock. People think I don't like it but what I hate in any type of music is people who can't sing. For me Carol Thompson and Jean Adebambo are very talented singers.'

David says the UK reggae industry is a strong growth area but needs more organisation. 'The small record companies could do a lot more for themselves by sending every record they release to disc jockeys and radio stations. To say they don't send records out because they won't get played is a defeatist attitude.'

It takes him all of Saturday to put his show together — the rest of the week is spent acting if there's work. Records come from trusted contacts in JA and here, including Jet Star, and by doing the rounds of record shops. The amazing jingles are usually sent over from JA at no cost and David adds echoes etc in his studio. 'They give the show flavour,' he says.

Roots Rockers doesn't seem likely to change much in the future because, as David says 'there's a limit to what you can do.' He probably won't change much either. 'I've done what I wanted to do with my life. I want to continue acting and playing reggae on the radio.' □

TOP NOTCH

ARKVILLE THE TRIAL AND THE SUCCESS

Promoters Extraordinaire — that's how Arkville describes itself, with no reservation that it is the pioneer in promoting Black enterprise in Britain.

In the mere two-and-a-half years of its existence Arkville Promotions has dedicated itself to promoting 'the vast talent within the Black Community', and in this the company has spared no expense in staging events described as being both prestigious and ambitious.

Black Designers '82, like its predecessor Black Designers '81, and the Caribbean Food Festival held July through August this year, are all events, nay, 'occasions' aimed to highlight the very cream of Black achievement, claims the group.

A few days before the Black Designers '82 show, everything at the group's headquarters in Pall Mall (a bit up in the world from previous premises in Streatham) was 'hairy', or to translate, frantic. Semi-final preparations were being made for the Gala Evening of the Year which promised to be an odyssey of fashion design and cabaret.

Since the inception of Arkville in November 1979 the operative word has been professionalism. The kind of total, tight professionalism which means that you have to be harsh at times, says Tony Samuels, group director and publicity rep. 'It's the kind of business (promotions) where you must be prepared to lose friends', he continued.

The group began with Mark Lobban 23, and Neville Williams 26, (hence the ARK and the VILLE), who were doing community work for the Tooting Project in South London. This made them quite dab hands at organizing fund-raising events,

and when Tony Samuels also 26, joined their ranks in 1980, they soon put their heads and experiences together to plan events on a larger scale.

No-one knew quite how large until they discovered that the group was serious about using the Royal Albert Hall as the venue for this year's Black Designers show. (The same 'Royal Hall' filled to capacity each year with mainly students seemingly zonked out of their minds, belowing Land of Hope and Glory, in what seems to be an all embracing patriotic stupor).

Black Designers '81, held at the Commonwealth Institute last year, was in itself a huge leap for any promotions group, let alone one that had just set up shop. Yet the success of the show was such that now everyone seems to be jumping on do-it-yourself promotions band-wagon, particularly with organizing fashion shows. Arkville seem to have the 'feel' for promotion which means that they now have a spate of imitators, all following suit in activities, though not always in quality.

'What we're doing is taking the negative image of our community, that 'what's the use in trying' attitude, and turning it into something positive', said Tony, described as the one with the sweet-talk.

'The idea we have is to make people get up and do something positive for themselves, that's what we're doing. Too many of the wrong people benefit from our community, we're trying to reverse that cycle and put money back into the community', he said.

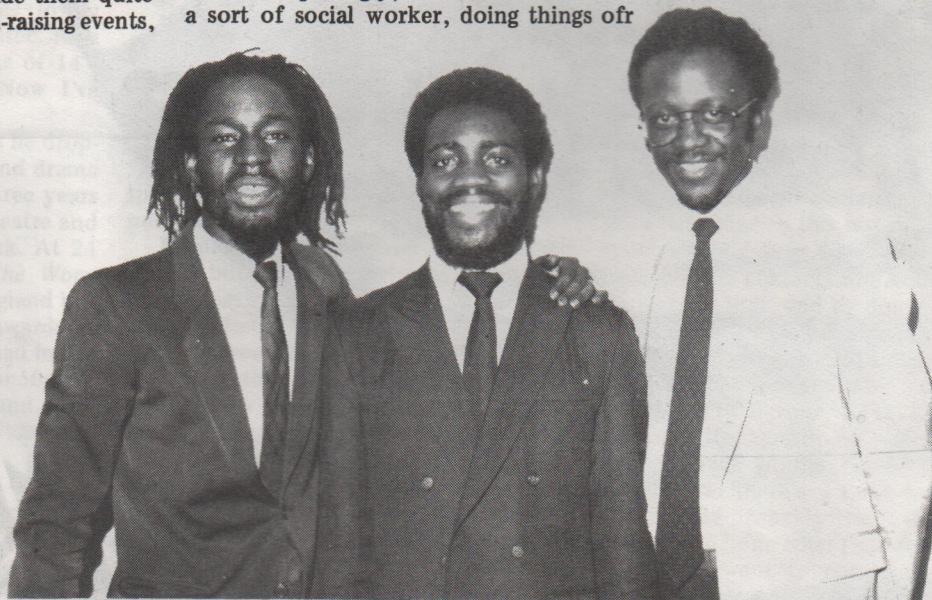
Not surprisingly, Arkville sees itself as a sort of social worker, doing things for

the Black community. With Black Designers it is promoting artistes and designers whose talents would go unnoticed if it were left up to the white controlled system. But which comes first, Arkville, the social worker or Arkville the businessmen? The answer is both. 'Part of the business is that we ourselves are talent promoting talent. We want to promote the integration of white business and black business in this multi-racial society. To highlight to the commercial public the vast talent within the black community', said Tony.

Yet for all their good intentions Arkville couldn't guarantee the support of the Black community, particularly Black business, for Black Designers '82. Shortly before the show the group suffered a financial setback which meant certain cancellation until the GLC and the Ernest Peart foundation, among others, stepped in with a financial life line.

Arkville isn't sure whether lack of support from the Black businesses was due to the recession or just lack of confidence but it dealt them a rotten blow. 'The concept of Black Designers is a good one and our only knock is that the Black business community weren't prepared to support it from the beginning, it took the GLC to step in.'

One thinks for certain, Black Designers is here to stay. Arkville see it as an annual event in the Black calendar, just like the Notting Hill Carnival. And as for Arkville Promotions, this is one 'talent show' that will run and run, although the group says it's 'struggling hard' to keep it's head above water.



SPECIAL

Organising Your Dance

IN A WORLD fast grappling with new technology and the economic recession it follows that leisure, whether enforced through circumstance, increases ten-fold. The views and values of those most aware or affected change and creative energy stands to be re-channelled from a conventional work ethic to one of increasing leisure.

Hand-in-hand with this revision of Society we see 'Entertainment' rearing its optimistic head from every corner, with a great deal of people jumping (professionally or as an audience) on 'the bandwagon of fun'.

Which brings me to the segment (and of course the curious outsider) who is seriously entertaining (no pun intended) the thought of organising their own 'big show' as he or she feels the needs of the people.

You may think I have just rambled on without reason but I do believe it wise to have the 'concept of leisure' fully within you if you are to give people your 100 per cent of dedication and professionalism. That said, we can now get to grips with the practicalities of such an undertaking.

Firstly, in order for your Disco/dance to succeed both creatively and financially you need to set yourself a safe and fool-proof timetable, one that you'll strictly adhere to at all times.

That timetable should be the 'spring-board' for all your decision-making while preparations are being made and should

able crisis and it could be related to any of the above! It is always best to work from the point of view that the ideal is a distant reality.

After considering these generalities and having worked out your proposed schedule the next step is arranging the time of year for your function. When deciding this, foremost in your mind should be times of the year when people have that special day they want to fill with a good time.



These we can call 'peak periods' and are as follows: November, December, January (winter holidays), February (Valentines week); April, May (spring holidays); July, August (summer holidays).

It is during these periods when just about everything is happening and competition for the promoter is at its most fierce. It's also the time when the up-and-coming promoter, if the venture is successful, can gain the sort of recognition to give him or her a household name in more than a few homes.

It is because of this strong competition that the wise promoter will book the venue months in advance and not think 'hey, it's Bank Holiday Monday next month, I think I'll put on that show I've been thinking about for ages'. Remember, there's always another Bank Holiday Monday not to mention the countless other 'celebrated' days scattered throughout the year.

Now the date is set the 'promotions machine' starts to roll and first stop is your selection of venue. This choice is determined by a variety of aspects such as location, the type of people you wish to attend — whether it be broad-based (a string of events with 'something for everyone') or specialised (fashion show, 'strictly dub' and so on).

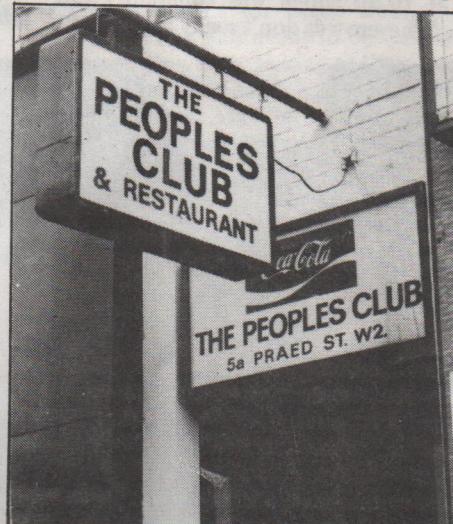
It is crucial that your venue is carefully chosen in terms of expected capacity audience, venue lay-out with regards to the audience's comfort and the pro-

jection of the show itself (lighting, acoustics and so on). Again, when thinking of where to hold your Disco/dance you should, if you really shop around, find quite a variety of places, all offering their own 'moods and atmospheres' together with the basic physical layout.

To simplify this they can be broken down as follows: Hotel Function Rooms (Suites); Commercial Function Rooms, Town Halls; Community Centres; Church Halls: Most promoters go for the Hotel and Commercial function rooms and usually the popular ones such as New Ambassadors Hotel, Grosvenor Club to name a few. Whatever the case, the choice is yours at the end of the day — so think hard on it.

When you have decided, telephone or write making sure you are still well in advance of your proposed date. Further reflection should be made concerning the accessibility of the proposed site — easy to travel to and located on/or near a main road and Tube station — and if the answer is yes, get writing or dial the number and wait for the pips!

The second part of this article in next month's issue will deal with bookings, publicity, stewards and a 'tickle' moral philosophy. Until then — Happy Dancing!



cover the booking of the venue, the sound or disco system, guest appearances and the printing of tickets, leaflets and posters and announcements to the press.

Of course, depending on the type of show the above are purely optional and it's your choice that matters. If you do run into difficulties your timetable, if carefully worked out, should always leave you enough time to deal with that inevit-

CLUB PROFILE

SPOTS CLUB

FRIDAY NIGHT AT the Podium in Vauxhall is when Spots Club takes over. Run by Entertainment Enterprise the Club has been a regular thing for the past six months.

In September Spots hosted the *Miss Lovely Legs* 1982 competition. Next on the agenda is the final of the page 5 Jamaican Gleaner contest (apparently organisation has changed hands from Junior King of Big 6). Lovers Rock queen, *Carol Thompson* will also make an appearance — guaranteed to draw the crowds, followed by the *Investigators* who were seen on stage at the Podium earlier this year.

I went to the plush no-expenses-spared club at 10.30 which was apparently too early. 'The crowds don't really roll in until

about midnight,' co-manager Trevor informed me. By 1am things were in full swing which left two hours clear for non-stop raving.

Resident Sound System TWJ kept a variety of sounds coming — from soul to soca — as nearly everyone took to the ample dance floor. Others hovered around the edge or sat at a number of tables which line the length of the bar.

Drinks range from 30p for Bitter 50p for juices and about 65p for shorts. A Port and Lemon set me back 85p. At the restaurant section you can buy patties for 40p or curried goat and rice, or chicken and rice, both with salad for £2.

These can be eaten while watching horror or kung-fu movies on the giant-sized video screen organised by Wayne and

Eddie of Twilight Video Entertainments, or sitting at one of the candle-lit tables near the dance floor.

The cost of a pleasant, weed-free (the management doesn't allow it) evening is £3.50 for members or £4.50 if you're not. Annual membership cards cost £3. A new innovation is a free bottle of champagne for any celebration with over 10 people.

About 400 people beat a path to the club every week but it can hold more. 'If we're not here in four months it won't be due to lack of effort on our parts but lack of support from our own black people,' said Trevor. So make it a date and don't be late for Spots, 1 Nine Elms Lane, New Covent Garden, Vauxhall, SW8. For more information call Entertainment Enterprise on 732-5896. □



WATCHTOWER

BEAUTY AND THE TALENT

'BUT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL', I thought aloud, 'A bit big for a fashion show ain't it?' Ignoramus. This was to be no ordinary fashion show, this was Black Designers '82 — The fashion odyssey. A Gala Evening. And the venue wasn't too big at all, not for the 4,000 people expected, with a large video screen ensuring every seat (from £18.50 to £2.50 standing) a front seat view.

Black Designers '82 held at the Royal Albert Hall on October 22nd, had promised to be 'the biggest, most spectacular single event in the world of fashion and design industry . . . the audience is guaranteed an atmosphere of surprise, delight, magic and fantasy.' It had also promised to be 'the biggest star-studded event . . . an occasion not to be missed'.

These promises were not totally unfulfilled. The jam-packed event left the audience, though below capacity, well entertained (although there were a few complaints of sore bottoms by the end of the three hour long evening).

The event combined fashion show and cabaret in a carefully planned (but under-rehearsed), unrivalled package of Black talent and ability. There were changes to the programme, which in parts resembled a talent show — though not a bad thing it was a bit apart from what was anticipated.

There were appearances from some of the big names in Black entertainment — Lover's rock queen Carol Thompson, soul singer Gail Grier, Jamaica's first lady of mirth, Louise Bennett appeared, as did soul group Loose Ends and Dance group Torso, who gyrated their way to a hefty applause.

There were also star turns by not so well known performers. The presence of television cameras made everyone give all they had, even if most of them were miming.

The only thing that looked shabby and out of place under the circumstances were the 'GLC — Working for London' banners draped under the balconies. These acted as a reminder that the GLC had sponsored this prestigious occasion, but the banners crediting them for it just acted as an eyesore.

The fashion show itself was a feast of design and creativity. It featured collections from twelve highly talented Black designers, who displayed their far reaching potentials in the various categories of men's and women's day and evening wear.

Hosting the show was singer Amii Stewart. She tuned in to livening 'up what action there was on the catwalk, unlike

some compere who just read out a list of garments regardless of whether they appeared or not.

Many of the designers turned out five star collections, with a particularly good day-wear section. Ethney Charles had a striking collection of men's wear in leather and suede, winter blues with chunky knits. Jean Daley's ladies day-wear collection was possibly the most impressive. She managed to capture a look for autumn and winter with her clever use of vivid and warm colours and prints in mustards, pinks, olive greens and golds — dresses, and separates in the simplicity and ease of brushed cottons.

Kid Creole's 'No fish today' should have been playing when Cardi Revere's collection came on stage. This designer already has a name similar to the designers who dominate the fashion capitals of the world, and it seems he's heading the same way too. His collection featured a cultural, peasant look in prints and styles, with just the right straw hats to crown the effect.

Later on 'miss Lou' (Louise Bennett) came on stage in a similar Carmen Miranda type dress, just like those in Cardi's collection. Had he designed her's too? Reginald Knight was another designer with a pleasing collection, his impressions conjured up images of 'Jungle Jap' and 'Kenzo' window dressings.

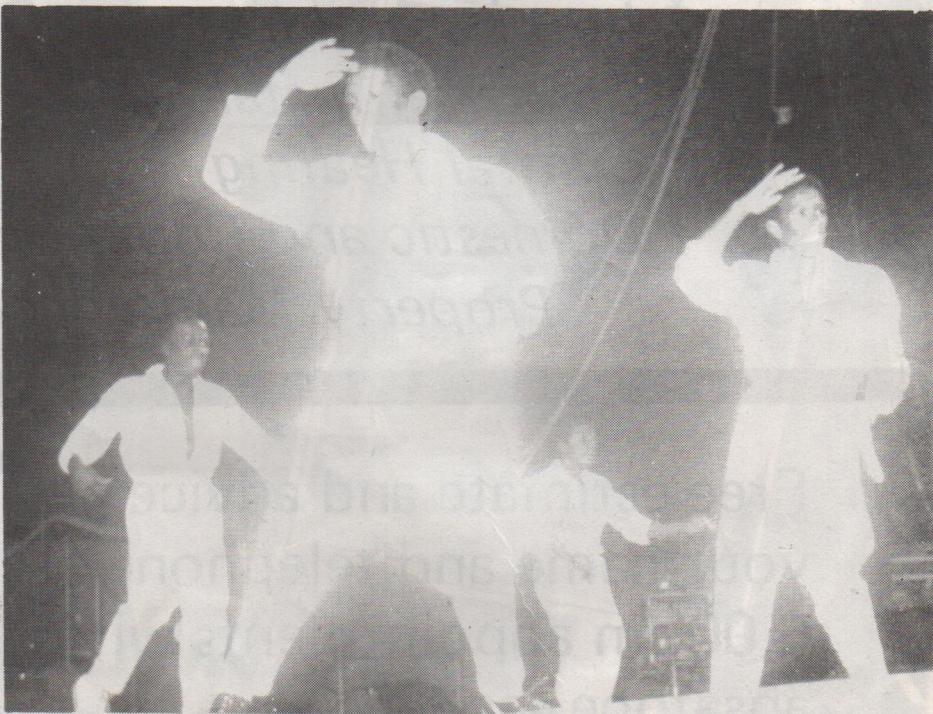
The design content and creativity of the fashion show was enhanced by excellent choreography and musical selection,

appearing to reclaim the stage, with movement to break up the show which otherwise could easily have become monotonous.

Louise Bennett is famous in Jamaica for her folk songs and story telling. This night she took a 'terribly, terribly english' Black audience at the Royal Albert Hall and had them in fits of laughter as she taught them how 'not to spoil up de good, good jamaican'. 'It's han, not hand. It's han', let me hear you say it.' A shy response soon gave way to loud laughter and even some embarrassed blushes. But miss Lou is a true entertainer and she gave a real boost to the evening (although I'm not sure how many of the fashion buyers took such jollity).

Arkville Promotions presented yet another first with the Black Designers '82 show. The concept of Black Designers is an excellent one which, among other things, serves to highlight the tremendous talent and ability which exists in Black Britain. The imagination of the designers, the grace of the models, and the success of the whole cabaret atmosphere presented that there's a lot of beauty and talent in the Black Community (particularly the commercial talent of the designers).

Much of this talent would be stifled if it wasn't for Black Designers, but a show like this needs to be further supported. However, as long as there's the talent to be promoted and a sizeable venue, there'll be Arkville.





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